

BIG 52 PAGES OF EXCITING ADVENTURES IN FULL COLOR

Republic Pictures Day

A Fawcett Publication

ROCKY LANE

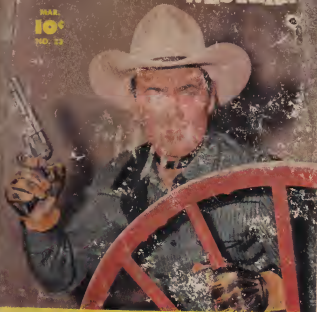
WESTERN

Featuring His Stallion BLACK JACK

MAR.

10¢

NO. 23



THE DAUNTLESS SECRET MARSHAL OF THE WILD WEST STARS IN
THE DRYGULCHING DESPERADO!

The following outstanding magazines are weekly identified as their covers by the words A FAIRCHILD PUBLICATION.

CAPT. MARVEL ADVENTURES • EAGLE LANE WESTERN • THE MARVEL FAMILY • FAIRCHILD'S FURRY FRIENDS
SWORD COMICS • WESTERN HERO • ROCKY LANE WESTERN • HYPOCAITHE JUNGLE KING • GARY HAYES WEST •
CAPT. MARVEL JR. • MASTER COMICS • TOM MIX WESTERN • MOORE HALL WESTERN • HOPALONG CASSIDY •
BOB CAMERON WESTERN • BILL BORD WESTERN • SIX-GUN HEROES • SAULY SHERIFF WESTERN

Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.

W. A. Proffer, Jr., President

REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

Rocky Lane

X MARKS THE SPOT



DEATH STALKS ON THE HEELS OF FORTUNE AND STRIKE WITHOUT WARNING IN ONE OF THE WICKEDEST PLOTS SPRUNG IN THE MIND OF MAN—UNTIL THE FEARLESS COURAGE OF ROCKY LANE AND HIS THUNDEROUS SHOTS BLAST OPEN THE STRANGE CASE OF **X MARKS THE SPOT!**



A THE CHIEF MARSHAL'S OFFICE
ONE AFTERNOON.....

DO YOU SEND FOR ME, GARY?

YES, ROCKY! I'VE GOT AN ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU—A MIGHTY TIGHT ONE!



WHAT IS IT, CHIEF?

SOME SILVER STRIKES HAVE BEEN MADE ON MESQUITE FLAT AND A BOOMTOWN HAS SPRUNG UP!



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT, GARY?

PLENTY! THE POLICE WHO HAVE MADE THE BIG STRIKES HAVE DISAPPEARED—MYSTERIOUSLY, SAY YOU?

ROCKY LANE WESTERN



ROCKY LANE WESTERN



WHEN I SAW ONE OF THE
WOMEN FOLKS FLEE THEIR
CLUBS AND I SAW THEM OVER
TO SOME WAGON, I WAVED
PRESTON...
AND I AM
TO FIND OUT
WAY!



WHERE
CAN I
FIND
A GENT
NAMED
PRESTON,
AND WHAT
DOES HE
LOOK
LIKE?

YOU'LL FIND HIM DEALING ARRO
AT THE RED FRONT SALOON!
YE CAN'T MISS THE SLICK
BROWWIDER BY THE SLEAZY
MUSTACHE HE WEARS!



THANKS! I'LL POP INTO
THE RED FRONT SALOON
FOR A WORD
WITH
HIM!



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AT THE RED
FRONT SALOON....

WOW! I'M ROCKY LANE,
DISTRICT MARSHAL! IF YOUR
NAME IS PRESTON, I AM TO
HAVE A WORD
WITH YOU!

ROCKY
LANE, OH!
WHAT
CAN I
DO FOR
YOU?



YOU CAN SHOW ME THE
SEEDS TO THE CLAIMS YOU
HOLD!

SURE, LANE, WHY NOT?
I'VE GOT THEM RIGHT
HERE!



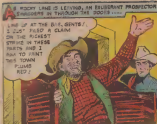
EVERY ONE OF
THESE SEEDS HAS
BEEN SIGNED WITH
AN X!

SO WHAT? IT'S NOT
MY FAULT IF THE SEATS
I DO BUSINESS WITH
CAN'T WRITE,
IS IT?



I RECKON NOT,
BUT IT DOES
LOOK A MITE
STRANGE!

HA, HA! YOU HAVEN'T GOT A
THING ON ME, LAWREN--AND
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET
ANYTHING ON ME, SAULY!





ROCKY LANE WESTERN





ROCKY LANE WESTERN





A FEW MINUTES LATER.....

HERE THEY COME--JUST AS I RECORDED THEY WOULD!

ALL RIGHT, MEN! SET THE TORCHES TO THE BUILDING!

A S ROCKY LANE OFFERS TO BURN HIS LAND AND GIVES BLACK JACK A SOFT COMMAND.....

GOT THEM! PULL BLACK JACK, OLD PAID!

HUH?

WAVE'N BEING ASKED UP IN THE AIR!

BANG! BANG!

THESE SHOTS WILL BRING THE SHERIFF ON THE RUN--HERE HE COMES!

HELP! TURN US LOOSE! WE'RE BEING SHOOTED TO DEATH!

WHAT IN THUNDERBOLT'S GONE ON HERE?

IT'S GOING, YE PIRATE OF VAMPIRES--TOWARD THAT DELHOUSE!

YOU DON'T HAVE A THING YOU CAN PROVE AGAINST ME, ROCKY LANE! IT'S JUST YOUR HONOR AGAINST OURS!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, YOU MINOR COWBOY!

A FEW SECONDS LATER, ROCKY LANE TIGHTENS THE NOOSE OF JUSTICE AROUND THE PIRATES' NECKS--

THERE ARE THE PIRATES WHO TRIED TO KILL ME!

NO! NO! TAKE THEM AWAY-- I'LL CONFESS! I SAW THAT PROSPECTOR BURIED--ON THE GROUND!

LOCK THEM UP, SHERIFF! YOU WERE PLAINLY LOGG, FREESONS, WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD BEAT THE LAW!

SPECIAL OFFER!

**YOU...
CAN GET
"ROCKY'S"**



**PICTURE WITH "BLACK JACK"
AUTOGRAPHED TO YOU PERSONALLY!**

SEND FOR IT TODAY!

Enclose this coupon and \$3.00 for one LARGE photo of "ROCKY" and "BLACK JACK" autographed to you personally.

print plainly

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ADDRESS:

If you want 5 LARGE pictures of "ROCKY" and "BLACK JACK" all autographed to you personally, enclose \$15.00. Address: ROCKY LANE, 4024 North Bedford Ave., North Hollywood, Calif.)



ROPING 'N' RIDING With



4024 NORTH RAYFORD AVE.
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

HOWDY, PARDN :

IT'S MIGHTY GOOD TO BE RIDING YOUR WAY ONCE AGAIN AND I WANT TO THANK YOU PARDN FOR ALL THOSE GREAT LETTERS YOU'VE BEEN SENDING TO ME . BLACK JACK AND I SURE APPRECIATE THEM !

ON THE WAY OVER I MET BOB HANNERS. HE'S LOOKING PRETTY WELL NOW, BUT IT TOOK A HARD LESSON TO DO IT. YOU SEE, FRIENDS! BOB WAS ONE OF THOSE FOOLISH CRITTERS WHO BELIEVED A BODY COULD STAY STRONG AND HEALTHY BY EATING ONLY FANCY CAKES AND COOKIES, CANDY AND AN OCCASIONAL HOT DOG . WELL, PARTNERS, NOT THAT THOSE THINGS AREN'T FINE ----IN THEIR PLACE, BUT AS A SWEETY DISH THEY JUST DON'T HOLD UP.

WHEN MR. HANNERS ARRIVED, BOB HANNERS WOULD JUST GRIP THE MEAT AND VEGETABLES TO GET AT THE DESSERT. SURE, LOTS OF HANNERS TOLD HIM THAT A BODY NEEDED GOOD, STRONG SOUPS AND MEATS, RICE, EGGS AND VEGETABLES, BUT BOB WAS JUST A THICK-HEADED BROODTAIL. THEN IT HAPPENED.

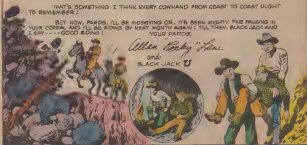
HE AND FRANK DOGGS WERE HIGH IN THE HILLS DURING A WEEK OF TERRIFIC CLOUDBURSTS. THE RAIN WEAKENED THE GROUND AND THEY JUST ESCAPED BEING CAUGHT IN A LANDSLIDE THAT LEFT THEM ORPHANED IN A WET CAVE ON EARLY PASS. IT WAS DAYS BEFORE THEY COULD BE REACHED . IN THAT MEAN, BOB AND FRANK HAD TO LIVE ON THE STRENGTH THAT THEIR BODIES HAD STORED FROM YEARS OF PROPER NOURISHMENT . FRANK CAME THROUGH ALL RIGHT, BUT IN BOB'S CASE, THERE WAS NO STRENGTHENING OF STRENGTH . THE YEARS OF SKIPPING THE GOOD FOOD FOR THE FANCY DISHERTS CAUGHT UP TO BOB. HE GREW SO WEAK THAT WHEN RESCUERS FINALLY REACHED THE CAVE, HE HAD TO BE CARRIED DOWN.

WELL, PARTNERS, SINCE THEN, BOB'S LEARNED THE NECESSITY OF SENSIBLE EATING AND THAT FANCY DOGS AND CANDY SNACKS ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR STRENGTH-BUILDING, VITAMIN-FILLED MEAT, RICE, POTATOES AND VEGETABLES ----NO MORE THAN A FLOW HORSE IS A SUBSTITUTE FOR A HART PINTO !

THAT'S SOMETHING I THINK EVERY COWHAND FROM COAST TO COAST OUGHT TO REMEMBER !

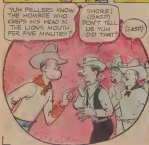
BUT NOW, PARDN, I'LL BE MOBBING ON. IT'S BEEN MIGHTY FINE RIDING IN YOUR CORRAL AND I'LL BE RIDING BY NEXT MONTH AGAIN ! TELL THEM, BLACK JACK AND I SAY ----GOOD RIDING !

Allan "Rocky" Lane
and
BLACK JACK U



SAGE- BRUSH

'WELL TIMED



Here's where I keep my
"TOP SECRET" stuff!



Make a TREASURE CHEST

with **SCOTCH** Cellophane Tape



TAKE A CARDBOARD BOX or carton and make a hinged lid for it with "Scotch" Cellophane Tape. Run the tape the length of the lid for maximum strength.



COVER THE BOX with bright wrapping paper or construction paper, taping it in place with cellophane tape. Use different paper for covering lid.



MAKE A LATCH for the lid this way. Put two strips of tape on the box as shown, then put a strip on the lid, doubling over the end to use as a tab.



DECORATE your Treasure Chest with cutouts from magazines—trees, animals, seascapes, dolls. Strips of transparent cellophane tape will hold 'em in place.

FREE!

Send for your copy of "Treasure with Tape" new booklet full of play ideas from: Wake Up! Inc., Minnesota Mining & Mfg. Co., St. Paul 6, Minn., enclosing the paid tab from a roll of "Scotch" Cellophane Tape.



One each.

304 124
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The apparent no glue
Books without actual glue



REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

Rocky Lane



THE DRYGULCHING DESPERADOS

KEEP THOSE HORNS PLUNGING, BLACK JACK! WE'VE GOT TO BE IN REDROCK AT THREE O'CLOCK! REMEMBER WHAT THE CHIEF TOLD US AT HEADQUARTERS!

Only the lowest kind of valiant would turn a cry for aid into a vicious attack. But it is just that kind of coyote **ROCKY LANE** faces as he meets -- **THE DRYGULCHING DESPERADOS!**

AS HE RACES THROUGH THE HILLS, SECRET LEGALIST ROCKY LANE'S MIND FLASHES BACK TO HEAD-QUARTERS THE DAY BEFORE.....

I GOT IT, CHIEF! I'M TO PICK UP THE PRISONER, WELT DAWSON, AT REDROCK JAIL AND TAKE HIM TO THE COUNTY PRISON IN CENTER!

RIGHT, ROCKY! DAWSON'S A SICK YERBUNT AND WE'RE GUARD HIS MEN MIGHT TRY TO SPRING HIM FROM JAIL! THE COUNTY PRISON IS THE PLACE FOR HIM!

ALL RIGHT, CHIEF! BLACK JACK AND I'LL NOW-TAIL IT FOR REDROCK!

SHERIFF TODD, IN REDROCK, IS EXPECTING A MARSHAL TO PICK UP DAWSON AT THREE O'CLOCK TOMORROW! GOOD LUCK, ROCKY!

AND SO ROCKY RACES TOWARD REDROCK WHEN SUDDENLY.....

HEY, THERE, PARTNER-- HELP ME!

WHA! BLACK JACK! SOMEONE'S IN TROUBLE! LET'S SEE WHAT'S THE MATTER!









BUT I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT THE REAL ROCKY LANE WOULDN'T HAVE NEEDED A FLEET OF DEPUTIES TO HANDLE ONE PRISONER!

WELL, NOW THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE! WILLY DAWSON HAS BEEN FREED BY HIS MEN! WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE A WAY TO GET HIM BACK!



WILLY DAWSON—DROPPED DOWN ON US WITH HIS WARRIORS AT GULLEY PASS!

THE POLICAT! SHERIFF TEEP THOUGHT HE HAD HIM BLOCKED OFF UP AT VALLEY SPRING!



AND THE DAYS TO FOLLOW...

SHERIFF—MARSHAL! WILLY DAWSON'S JUST CLEARED OUT THE BARR AT YELLOW GREEN!

CONSUM! AND WE WERE TIPPED OFF HE INTENDED TO STAY HERE AT FOUR CORNERS! THAT GYUSS DELIBERATELY TRAPPED US UP AGAIN!



ROCKY, THAT BROOMTAIL IS LEADING US A HIGH AND MIGHTY CHASE!

NOW YOU SAY THAT AGAIN, SHERIFF! BUT I'LL FIGURE A WAY TO WAB HIM TET!



NOW ONE DAY, IN REDRICK.....

SHERIFF—HOLD IT! THAT VARMINT OVER THERE—THAT'S TIGHT-LIPS WILSON! HE WAS WITH DAWSON'S MEN WHEN THEY DRAKELOCHED ME!

THEN LET'S WAB THE MANDY COOTE AND FIND OUT WHERE DAWSON'S HIDE-OUT IS!



NO, HE'LL NEVER TALK! I KNOW THAT FROM THE FIRST TIME I SENT HIM TO JAIL! THAT'S HOW HE GOT THE NAME TIGHT-LIPS!

THEN WHAT CAN WE DO? WE CAN'T JUST LET HIM SLIP AWAY FROM US!



I'VE BEEN THINKING, SHERIFF, OF THE WAY DAWSON HAD HIS MEN DRAYLOUCH ME! TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME!

TIGHT-LIPS WILSON IS IN TOWN TO SEE WHAT INFORMATION HE CAN GATHER FOR BRADSON'S NEXT TRIP! MEANWHILE, YOU CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES AND GET A CLOSED WAGON! THEN, BEET--BEET--BEET!

YER SO ON-- I'M LISTENING!

SOON AFTER, IN THE FOOTHILLS OUTSIDE REEDOOK.....

SEE HIM YET, ROCKY? FROM HERE YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE THE ROAD FROM REEDOOK!

THERE'S A RIDER COMING ALONG NOW!



IT'S TIGHT-LIPS WILSON! HE'S RIDING OUT OF TOWN NOW!

GOOD! SET INTO THE WAGON AND I'LL CROSS HIS TRAIL AT LOW RIDGE!

OKAY, SHERIFF! YOU KNOW THE PLAN! STAY A MITE AHEAD OF HIM SO HE CAN SEE YOU TILL WE GET DEEPER INTO THE HILLS!

RIGHT! AND THEN WE'LL PUT SOME SALT ON THAT VULTURE'S TAIL! GIDDAP--!



SOON AFTER, DEEPER IN THE HILLS, THE WAGON HALTS, AND.....

WELL, THERE... PARTNER! CAN YOU COME OVER? I'VE GOT SOME HELP, FRIEND!

THAT'S IT, PARTNER--RIGHT OVER HERE! I'M BEHIND! I'M IN A LITTLE TROUBLE!

HE'S COMING OVER! SO FAR SO GOOD!









WHEN IT COMES TO BLOWING BUBBLES, FLEER'S DUBBLE BUBBLE CAN'T BE BEAT!

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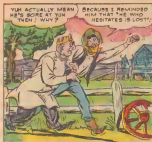
DEE DICKENS

and

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA









REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

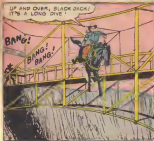
Rocky Lane

ON THE BRIDGE OF DEATH

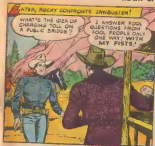


VICIOUS GREED, THE MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND MOST CRIMES AND DEADLY VIOLENCE, CAUSED THE GIANT BRUTE, JERKUSTER BRACK, TO SQUEEZE AND CRUSH SMALLER, FUGITIVE MEN! YET EVEN THE FEARLESS FIGHTING UNDERCOVER MARSHAL ROCKY LANE IS POWERLESS TO STOP HIM, FOR HE OPERATES WITHIN THE LAW... UNTIL HE IS BLASTED OUT OF SOUNDS BY A TERRIFIC EXPLOSION!











ROCKY LANE WESTERN





FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A **COMIC MAGAZINE!**
DIRECTLY FROM TELEVISION!

CAPTAIN VIDEO

10¢ ON NEWSSTANDS ACROSS THE NATION 10¢

BLACK JACK'S Hitching Post

YOU KNOW, PARD, HONOR AND HORSES GO TOGETHER: WHEN A RINNY HAS A HORSE THAT WINS AN HONOR, IT MAKES HIM FEEL A HEAP BETTER THAN IF HE WON IT HIMSELF!



HORSES ARE HONORED IN MANY WAYS: WHEN SOME GREAT GENERAL DIES, AND THE FOLKS WANT TO MAKE A STATUE IN HIS MEMORY, THE SCULPTOR JUST NATURALLY SETS HIM UP ON HIS HORSE!



AND BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, THE EMPEROR CALIGULA DIDN'T REWARD THE HORSES' WHEN IT CAME TO HONORING HIS BRONCO: HE HONORED HIM BY MAKING HIM CONSUL OF ROMA!



BUT I RECKON NO BRONCO EVER RECEIVED MORE HONOR THAN CORTES'S BRONCO: HE WAS WORN-SHIPPED AS A GOD BY THE AZTEC INDIANS!



HONOR DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN BLUE RIBBONS AND LACRED INVESTES: THERE IS AN HONOR WHICH OUR MASTERS BESTOW ON US THAT IS PRICELESS!



AND AS FOR ME—I WOULDN'T SWAP PLATES WITH ANY BRONCO THAT EVER LIVED! HARK! ROCKY LANE FOR A RAMP IS THE GREATEST HONOR I COULD HAVE!



gopher- face

THE MAD MATTER!



ROAMY and JULIE



OUR ENGAGEMENT IS OFF, ROAMY! AND DON'T YUH DARE ASK ME TO RETURN SOME RING!

I WON'T JUNE— BUT THE FURNACE COMPANY WILL!



WHEAT! YUH ASKIN TO SAY YEH GAVE ME A RING THAT YUH DON'T PAY FOR?

LISTEN, THE ONLY KIND OF A RING I CAN AFFORD IS A RING ON THE TELEPHONE!



HEY, COME TO THINK OF IT, THE FIRST TIME I PROPOSED TO YEH, YUH RIGHT NEAR AS!

THAT'S RIGHT!



THEN NOW COME YUH HEARD ME WHEN I SHOWED YUH THAT DIAMOND RING?

YUH POOL—



... I'M NOT STONE DEAD!

(GASP) !!!



ROCKY LANE WESTERN





COWARD'S COMEBACK

By Tracy Lee



LD Jed Barren, grizzled by western wind and weather, stood in the doorway of the office beneath the sign that read, Sheriff, and watched his son walk toward him. A mighty nice looking lad, Jed thought. So much like his mother, he was. The same soft blonde hair, the open face, the light gray eyes. Jed's heart tightened in his chest, as it always did when he thought of Della, dead now three many years. Larry had been only a tadpole when his mother died, a curious-minded youngster of six playing games before the cabin while his

broads . . . Jed pushed the melancholy thoughts away. That was long ago. And he had promised Della he would take good care of the boy, make a man of him, a fine upstanding man. The old man's lips clamped shut and little knots of muscle worked under the wrinkled skin. He had failed! Failed Della, failed himself, and failed his son. Just how, he didn't know. But he had. Larry was a coward.

Larry approached his Dad. On his vest, as on the older man's, was pinned a battered star. Larry's read: Deputy.

"You hear anything new, son?" Jed regarded the boy with keen eyes, wondering, hardly daring to hope, that this time matters would be different. And, at the same time, the agonized thoughts that churned in his brain tried to find a way out for Larry—a way out of the danger that was soon to come.

"The same story, Dad." Larry went into the office, took a rifle from a peg on the wall and began to clean it with an oily rag. Jed followed him in, stood watching and listening as Larry told his story.

"It's the Maxwell gang, all right," Larry said. "They got a hide-out in the hills outside of Stovesville. Sheriff Holden over at Indian Gulch says he knows they're in there, but it ain't any use sending in a posse. Not in this country. Too many buttes, and little draws, places they can hole up and dry-gulch a man. He says to tell you it's best to wait till they come out to make a haul, and try to get 'em then. He thinks they'll be heading this way when they do."

Jed nodded. His eyes gazed out the grimy window, across and down the dusty street to a small brick building on the corner. A sun-bleached sign atop the building read: BANK.

The older man nodded again. "Yep. I thought Holden would figure like that. Truth is he don't want any doings with Bart Maxwell or his brothers."

Larry said, "Don't know as I blame him, Dad. They're killers, every one of 'em. Ain't anything in the oath says a peace officer has got to commit suicide."

The Sheriff turned his bleak old eyes on his son. For a moment their glances locked and held, then the younger man looked away. He shuffled to the door without again looking at his father. "See you later, Dad. I got to get over to the livery barn and see about my roan."

He was gone. Jed watched him go down the sun-parched street, out of sight, then went to his desk and sat down. From the holster, tied with yellow thong low on his leg, he took his old single action Colt. For a long time he sat there, staring at the worn butt, the places on the barrel where the finish had flaked away. An old gun, and a good one. He had always intended that Larry should have it one day, when he cashed in his chips for good. Now he wasn't so sure. He didn't want a coward to have that gun—not even his own son!

Reluctantly, forcing his mind, he recalled all the long history of the boy's weakness. The time they had been after the renegade Apaches, burning and killing across the countryside, and Larry had disappeared just before the fight, only to turn up later with a story of losing his way. The time they'd cornered that road agent up near Nogales, in a deadly gun duel, and Larry had again turned up missing. There were many other incidents—too many for the thing to be a mistake, an accident. No, his son was a coward, sure enough. A lump grew in the old man's throat and his eyes felt hot and swollen. Where had he failed? Where, in a life dedicated to upholding the law, to making the West fit for decent folk to live in, had he failed his own flesh and blood? Then, with the suddenly strong purpose of a man of action, of resource, he forgot the thing. There was other work to do. Important work. The Maxwell gang had to be rounded up. It was his job, and to do it he must lay a trap.

A week later all was in readiness. Word had been deliberately circulated that in the bank, lying in the pitifully vulnerable vault,

was a hoard of gold specie. Twenty thousand dollars! To make the haul more swifling, and to conceal the smell of a trap, Jed actually sent for a thousand in gold from another bank, and scattered it in top layers in the sparse bags. Soon, he knew, the word would pass like wildfire into the surrounding country, to the hulk where the killers waited just a chance.

As the days passed, Jed watched his son get more and more nervous. Every day, during banking hours, they lay concealed across the street from the bank, heavily armed, waiting for the men that never came.

"If the Maxwells are coming," Larry complained, "I wish they'd come ahead. Gets a man's nerve tight as rawhide, this waiting. Been ten days now and not a sight of 'em."

"Maybe they won't ever come," Jed told him. "Maybe they smelted trap and lit out for other parts. They're smart bombers, from what I hear." As he spoke he saw his son's face light up, and new bitterness crawled in him. He's hoping I'm right, Jed thought. He's hoping he don't have to face gunfire ever! Suddenly tenderness and sorrow swept away his anger. His boy was in trouble, sure enough. You couldn't dodge gunfights forever, not in this country, and a coward never won a fair fight. If Larry didn't learn pretty soon, didn't conquer his fear, he would be easy prey for any third rate gunman that happened along and forced him to fight.

When the Maxwell gang struck, they almost cut-figured old Jed. Instead of swooping in during the day, to make a quick haul amid a spatter of shots, and a fast getaway, they came in the middle of the night.

Jed was drowsing in the office when he heard the shots. From across the room Larry roused and looked at his Dad in sudden alarm. "What's that?" he cried. "Sounded like it came from down by the bank."

The old man was already out of the office, in his shirt sleeves, running with the Colt ready in his hand. He hugged the ragged shadows of store fronts, keeping under cover, and peered down the moon-bright street. Horses stood before the door of the bank, moving uneasily, nuzzling the still figure that lay stretched nearby. Jed saw it was old man Fellows, the cashier who had been working late. Dead. Then the door of the bank swung back and there was a spate of hurrying figures, made dark and sinister by the bright moon. Masks, black as the shadows, covered the faces of the men. They ran for the horses carrying small canvas bags, and as they ran Jed heard on men give a brutal laugh.

Jed leapt. His lead took the foremost runner in his stride, doubled him over, sent him sliding on his face in the dust. The bag he held broke and gold gleamed mellow in the moonlight. Still another man tried for his horse, and Jed's slug broke his arm. There was

shouting and curses as the men realized they could not mount and escape until the deadly gun in the shadows was silenced. Lead began to come Jed's way, singing past his ears, poking the horse trough behind which he now lay. A stream of water gurgled and fell to the dust before him.

Jed was firing under the trough now, sweeping the shadows in the bank facade with the searching, probing, biting slugs from his old Colt. He had them, he knew, but he couldn't hold them forever. One of them would flank him soon, or a lucky shot would get him. Where was Larry? If the boy was there they would have a real chance. They could do the flanking, Jed holding the bandits down while Larry took them from another direction. Even with the thought a bullet flicked past his arm, taking cloth and a little skin with it. The pain of the bullet was nothing; the pain of Larry's not being there to help his Dad was unbearable. Sick despair rose in him and, for a moment, he did not care that the bandits were running, closing in, trying to circle around to get him, Larry . . .

Then, out of the corner of his eye, Jed saw his son. Saw him back there, shuffling in the shadows, his gun yet unhoisted. He was watching his father fight, maybe die. He was so afraid, so bound up with fear and trembling! Jed felt sorrow for his son even in that desperate moment. And then he acted—he gambled everything to break the iron grip of cowardice.

Jed rolled over into the moonlight. He clenched his stomach and moaned: "They got me, Larry! G-get me! Please, son! D-don't let them get away with it!" And he waited, listening. There was a moment of deadly quiet. Then new gunfire began to blast the shadows apart as Larry, his young face white and wet, ready for action, came out of the darkness and began to walk toward the door of the bank. The guns in his hands were speaking in a deadly rhythm. As he passed the spot where Jed lay the old man heard his son say, "It's all right, Dad. I'll get 'em for you!" And Jed rolled, was on his feet, and across the street and into the fight.

WHEN the dying was over and the Maxwell boys quit, and while Jed and his son were having their wounds treated, there was a moment of awkward silence. Larry looked curiously at his Dad. "I sure thought you were killed, Dad. The way you sounded."

Jed grinned back at him. "Reckon maybe I did, Larry. A fellow does and says funny things when lead hits him. Why, I didn't get anything but a scratch." As though anything, he thought, could hurt a man who has just found his son again. And this time for keeps.

THE END

REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR



Rocky Lane

and DEATH'S HOAX!

GO TO THE OLD HOUSE, NAILED SHUT AND TIGHTLY BOARDED UP, CONTAIN JUST AN SCOTTISH ROUGHNESS PLAYING A MAGAZINE JOKE ON THE WORLD? OR WAS THERE REALLY A KILLER FORCED TO STRIKE? ROCKY FACES THE ANSWER AS HE SOLVES—**DEATH'S HOAX!**





ROCKY LANE WESTERN



YOU'RE BENTON, I TAKE IT. THE MAN WHO SENT THAT LETTER FOR HELP TO HEAD-QUARTERS; ROCKY LANE'S MY NAME!

YEP, I'M BENTON, BUT DON'T STAND IN THE DOORWAY GARRN! GET INSIDE BEFORE THEY GET ME!



ALL RIGHT, FRIEND -- JUST TAKE IT EASY! WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

FEB MONTHS AND MONTHS I'VE BEEN SITTING LETTERS NEAR EVERY DAY, SAYING I'M GOING TO BE KILLED! SCHWABER WANTS TO KILL ME SO HE THEY CAN BUY THE VALUABLE LAND I OWN!

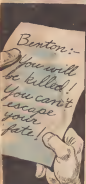


I--I DON'T DARE GO OUT! I STOCKED ALL THAT CANNED FOOD, BUT I'M RUNNING LOW NOW; THAT'S WHY I SENT FOR A MARSHAL! I NEED PROTECTION!



HERE, MARSHAL---HERE'S ONE OF THE LETTERS I GOT YESTERDAY! I--I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE! I'M TOO NERVOUS NOW!

YOU'RE TELLING ME!



I RECKON YOU NEED PROTECTION, ALL RIGHT! I'LL STAY HERE TIL THE HORSE SENDS YOU THOSE LETTERS TO CAUGHT! MEANWHILE, TRY TO GET HOLD OF YOURSELF!

THANKS, MARSHAL! I'LL TRY. I'VE AN EXTRA SET! YOU CAN SLEEP ON THAT!



LATER, THAT NIGHT---

POOR BENTON! HE'S SUCH A BUNDLE OF NERVES HE EVEN SLEEPS WITH HIS RIFLE! BUT IT'S BEEN MIGHTY QUIET ALL NIGHT!

THE NIGHT'S NEAR OVER
AND THERE HAIN'T BEEN
A SIGN OF ANYONE
SUNNING FOR BENTON—
— (YAWN)



100

I'VE BEEN THINKING, BENTON, THAT SINCE THE WARRANT DIDN'T SHOW UP LAST NIGHT, I'LL GO INTO TOWN TO TRY TO GET A LEAD ON HIM. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

YOU... YOU MEAN YOU'RE A-GOING TO LEAVE ME?

YOU -- YOU
SAY YOU'RE
A-GOING TO
LEAVE ME
ALONE,
MARRIAGE?



BUT YOU'LL COME BACK, HADRON!
BY THE BYE, BYE

ALL COME BACK, BENTON!
YOU'LL BE SAFE SO LONG
AS YOU STAY IN HERE!
NOBODY COULD GET IN
THE WAY YOU HAVE THE
PLACE SECURED UP!



2 BUT LATER, WHEN ROCKY MENTIONS BENTON IN THE HEARTY TOWN...

WANTS THAT,
MARSHAL...?
YOU'RE HERE
BECAUSE OLD
BENTON SENT
ME, WHO?



HEY, BOYS---DID YOS---
HO-HO---HEAR THAT...T
BENTON'S ASKED THE
NATIONAL'S OFFICE RE
PROTECTION---HO-HO
HO!

第一輯

44W-
44W-



WHAT'S SO PENNY
ABOUT A KILLER
SENDING A MAN
WARNING
LETTERS?

HAW-HAW--- YOU TELL HIM, JED!
HAW-HAW / HE FOOLED THE
MARRIAGE OFFICE!



MARSHAL, BENTON'S BEEN GIVING THE SAME THING OUT THOSE LETTERS FOR MONTHS NOW! HE'S HAD EVERYBODY IN TOWN UP THERE PROTECTING HIM AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER!











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